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THE ORIGIN AND FUTURE  
OF  
HOSPITAL SATURDAY

A GLANCE AT TEN YEARS' WORK,

BY

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NOTICE.

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SAMPSON GAMGEE.

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# HOSPITAL SATURDAY: ITS ORIGIN & FUTURE

## A GLANCE AT TEN YEARS' WORK.

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GENTLEMEN,

Just ten years ago we were preparing for our first Hospital Saturday Collection, which had been projected at a Working Men's Meeting, presided over by Mr. George Dawson, in the Birmingham Town Hall, the 18th January, 1869.

The gross proceeds of the ten collections in Birmingham amount to £38,681 0s. 11d., while a grand total of £65,610 6s. 4d. has been reached in this district, if we include our near neighbours—Dudley, £5,197 3s. 3d.; West Bromwich, £7,444 17s. 1d.; and Wolverhampton, £14,287 5s. 1d.

In the Metropolis, which, in the Hospital Saturday, as in the Hospital Sunday movement, has honoured Birmingham by following in its steps, Hospital Saturday has produced in eight collections, from 1874 to 1881 inclusive, £50,379, raising the total in London and the Midlands to **£115,989 6s. 4d.**

A decade is, by common consent, a convenient and safe period of time for historical observations and conclusions. Within ten years the projectors and principal workers of a movement mostly survive, their successors are getting into harness; the fire of first enthusiasm, if somewhat dimmed, still burns; and experience, that impartial counsellor of all men, has had time to impress some of its invaluable lessons.

The historical review in which we are engaged may, I trust, not be without its advantage in promoting the lasting success of the Hospital Saturday movement, and raising into prominence some of the principles which inspired it, and which, almost seem in danger of being lost sight of, under the gold heap so rapidly accumulating. But let me at once disavow intention of giving a complete history. In a complex work, in which many men are engaged, of various temperament, culture, and social status, giving credit to everyone for good intentions, it is not consistent with human nature to suppose that each could be a good judge of others merits.

Such an award is most usefully and fittingly left to time; for contemporaries are very apt to exaggerate the importance of personal questions, which, however carefully debated, are rarely profitable, and are very apt to warp the judgment on matters of public and lasting concern.

I shall only refer to individuals, where doing so is essential to accuracy of leading facts; and if adherence to such a plan deprive the narrative of some anecdotal interest, the fault will, I trust, be judged leniently, for its compensating advantages.

The results of Hospital Saturday in other places have been incidentally referred to as evidence, if any were needed, of the importance of the movement. But my observations henceforward

will be almost exclusively confined to an endeavour to learn the lessons taught by Hospital Saturday in Birmingham, where it originated as an offshoot of one of our chief local glories, now, by adoption, a child of the English speaking race over the world—Hospital Sunday.

True it is that at Liverpool and Manchester, from the first introduction of Hospital Sunday, collections were made in their industrial establishments the Saturday immediately preceding, and I gratefully remember the cheerful assistance rendered by the Manchester Secretary, the Rev. Mr. Henn, in giving us the benefit of his experience. But, so far as I know, Birmingham inaugurated Hospital Saturday, as an independent movement.

Our Hospital Saturday, its Committee, and plan of work, are the lineal and unbroken heritage of "The Working Men's Fund for the Extension of the Queen's Hospital."

A Special Committee having been appointed, in 1868, to consider a representation I had made to the Queen's Hospital Board, setting forth the very unsatisfactory state of the Out-patient Department, the Resident Physician and the Resident Surgeon were requested to send in a detailed report. Those gentlemen found, that in the Surgeons' waiting room each patient had sixty-three, in the Physicians' sixty, feet of air per patient; a pestilential state. There were no water-closets connected with the waiting rooms, *absolutely no convenience for isolating contagious cases*. The dressing room for accidents was dark, small, and imperfectly ventilated, and the dispensary was a passage.

Such a state of things roused the Committee, who were most anxious to remedy the evils. But how was that to be done with an empty exchequer? I sent out invitations to a picked number of working men. They proffered help at once, and the Hospital Committee accepted it with unreserved cordiality.

Who was to tow the ship "self-help" out of port? By common consent we turned to George Dawson. He was then in his prime, full of manly vigour, jolly and tender-hearted, brimful, nay overflowing, with human sympathies. Our idea seemed to charm him. He placed himself entirely at our disposal, and those who remember him in the Chair at our first meeting in the Town Hall, January 16th, 1869, can well understand how it was that he had such a power with the masses. It was at that meeting that, in the course of a speech explanatory of our project, I threw out the hint, "Hospital Sunday is a Birmingham glory, and I see no reason why the employed should not have their Hospital Saturday."

Once constituted, on broadly representative principles, our Committee met every Tuesday evening, in the Committee Room of the Town Hall, and we pegged away steadily for three years. Many thought our progress very slow. They did not know our difficulties; and, had I the courage to recall them, little good would result. But for the pleasures of forgetting, those of memory would be poor.

Our work was an educational one; we had none of the excitement of politics; most of the men were strangers to the work and to me, and speed was impossible without risk. It is pleasant



to recall that with such Trustees as Alderman Avery, our present Mayor, and Mr. George Dixon, with William (now Councillor) Radford and the late Henry Hadley for Cashiers, Charles Hibbs as Vice-Chairman, Robert McRae as Secretary, and a Committee of 800 representatives of labour, the work proceeded in unbroken harmony. At our concluding meeting, having paid all bills and given an order to secure the capital money for the objects for which it had been subscribed, we reserved a nest egg. Nominally working for the Queen's Hospital, we kept steadily in view the idea of interesting the Working Classes in the support of all our Medical Charities. I moved, Mr. S. Bird seconded, and it was resolved—

“That an order be made on the Trustees for the sum of £25, payable to the order of . . . . ., such money to be expended in such manner as the twenty representatives elected at this meeting shall direct, with the view of promoting the *provident objects of the Working Men's Movement for the extension of the Queen's Hospital in the interest of the Medical Charities of Birmingham generally.*”

Thus you will see at the close, as at the commencement, of our old Committee's work, the provident idea was paramount; and though we had, as a practical matter, only begun by lending a helping hand to one Hospital, the Working Men's movement was designed “in the interest of the Medical Charities of Birmingham generally.” In the next step I took no part. An Artisans' General Medical Charities Fund was organised, with Mr. J. S. Wright as Chairman, Mr. Robert McRae, Secretary, and a very influential Committee.

It very soon became apparent that things did not run smoothly, in spite of excellent intentions, great skill of organisation, and a good deal of hard work. Preliminary expenses were heavy, money came in slowly, the transmitted nest egg of £25 soon vanished, and, when a debt took its place, it was once more proved that a stern chase after success is a very dispiriting affair. The drooping life never revived, and, looking on, I became anxious for the safety of our original principle.

The Queen's Hospital extension scheme had so grown beyond our control, that, while we had a fair balance at the bankers, I advised my Committee to hand it over to the Hospital authorities. But, the obligation in honour was upon us, to see that the annual income did not suffer through the extension, and to show that we had all along been in earnest in the resolve to help all the other Medical Charities.

Taking counsel with a few trusty friends, I drew up an appeal to the Mayor of Birmingham, then Alderman Ambrose Biggs, requesting him “to convene a Public Meeting, to consider the propriety of organising an Annual Saturday Collection throughout the industrial establishments of the town, in support of its Medical Charities.” Many hundreds of signatures were rapidly obtained; but, a halt was inevitable, if a collision was to be avoided. On November 13th, 1872, I received the following resolution from the Artisans' General Medical Charities Fund:—

"This Committee have heard a report that Mr. S. Gamgee is taking steps for the purpose of bringing about a movement for a Saturday Collection among the Working Classes for the benefit of the Queen's Hospital. They fear that such a movement will seriously prejudice the success of the undertaking in which they are engaged, and they therefore express a hope that Mr. Gamgee will seriously reconsider the desirability of proceeding any further with the scheme."

So, after four years' work, which had hitherto proceeded very smoothly and successfully, I found myself unexpectedly placed in opposition, and that by some of my own men. The requisition to the Mayor was kept quiet, time, that grand soother, was left to do its work, and I sought an interview with the Artisans' Committee. I then saw how matters stood, and felt my way for a conciliatory proposition to the Chairman, Mr. J. S. Wright. Still, matters looked so awkward, that I sought the advice of a very influential and able friend, who had been instrumental in smoothing away other difficulties in our earlier progress.

It was clear that the right policy was not to force the position, but to seek a compromise, for which the method was devised by Mr. G. J. Johnson. I hold in my hand the resolution with his erasures and corrections, which resulted in an amalgamation of the "Artisans' Medical Charities Fund," with the Hospital Saturday Requisitionists to the Mayor, and the formation of a joint committee with Mr. J. S. Wright, Chairman, myself Hon. Sec., Mr. Robert McRae, paid assistant.

In less than three months we banked over £4,700, the proceeds of our first Hospital Saturday, and Mr. G. F. Muntz, who had previously given £500 to the Fund in aid of the Working Men's Fund for the Extension of the Queen's Hospital, sent another £500 "as a mark of esteem for the noble effort and independent spirit of the working men."

Looking about to discover the causes of our first success, it may be said that the idea being a novel one, charmed as such, and inspired extraordinary exertions. So was Hospital Sunday new at starting; but would it have continued a success had not each year the Ministers of Religion inculcated the Holy precept of Charity, and the claims of Hospitals and Dispensaries, in their respective places of worship? If it was necessary for them, with cultured audiences, to work up sympathetic appeals, it is vastly to the credit of the working men that Hospital Saturday has continued the success it has been, though its organisation has been mainly worked by those who succeeded us, as an office matter; punctually, faithfully, it is cordially admitted, but still worked as a matter of routine.

When working men are told it is their duty to support the Hospitals, some people are apt to forget that these Institutions do not exist for the working classes alone. They are schools of practical medicine and surgery for the benefit of the whole community, and in Hospitals seek relief those who meet accidents on the public way, irrespective of class.

So lately as 1846 the working men of Birmingham contributed nothing to the General Hospital. In 1867, the year preceding the



establishment of "The Working Men's Fund for the extension of the Queen's Hospital," the working classes contributed to our Medical Charities the collective sum of £506 12s. 9d. That fund was started in 1868, and in three years the working men's payments for the Queen's Hospital extension amounted to £4,057 16s. The work was a good illustration of the truths, "that appetite grows with eating," and "love of well doing with doing it."

When the late George Dawson, at the Town Hall Meeting of January 18th, 1869—our Working Men's Committee's birthday,—stated that there was no reason why the working classes should not turn charitable into co-operative institutions, some thought that his language was figurative, and not very likely to be realised; but, as a fact, the expenses of the out-patient department of our Children's Hospital are about covered by the sixpence a fortnight paid with each child, totalling an average of £500 a year.

At our Women's Hospital the fees paid by patients on admission in 1880 amounted to £358 3s., exceeding by £87 16s. the subscription list of £270 7s. Including Hospital Saturday and other working class contributions, 7s. in the pound of that Hospital's expenses were in that year paid for by those who sought relief in it. At the local Skin and Lock Hospital, the income from subscriptions last year was only £125 8s. 8d., but the registration fees produced £181 9s. 10d. collectively.

The above figures prove that the working classes are in fact increasingly active co-operators in the maintenance of our Hospitals and Dispensaries. No one can doubt that a new vein has been struck, if not a new mine discovered; and that, though it may, and probably must, remain true, "that the poor we shall have always with us," the time is not far distant when a community like this—one of the most productive of wealth in the whole world—may be relieved of the opprobrium, in plain English, of the disgrace, of having, as now, one in four of its entire population nominally recipients of charity at our medical institutions.

Hospital Saturday has only as yet given an illustration of what may be done. The proceeds admit of being doubled with very little difficulty, and there is no valid reason why they should not be trebled.

Experience has proved that where the so-called system of "Registration Fees" prevails, the working classes, Hospital Saturday apart, will only subscribe reluctantly, if at all. At the Women's Hospital where the registration fee is half-a-crown, renewable every month, the annual subscription list includes no contributions from bodies of workpeople. At the Children's Hospital, where children are registered for Sixpence on admission, renewable every fortnight, the working men's subscriptions barely reach £9 per annum. At the Queen's Hospital, since the Shilling Registration fee was imposed, the previous growth of working men's subscriptions has stopped.

At the General Hospital and the General Dispensary, on the other hand, progress has been steady. In these institutions the working classes have tickets for their subscriptions, and some people may say that to look for privileges in return for charity is a pro-

ceding of questionable morality. I am not here to defend the old ticket system, pure and simple; but I venture to suggest that the contributions of wealthy and middle-class people to Hospitals, and those of workpeople, stand on a different footing. The former are in great part out of the abundance of wealth for charity. The latter are part of a provident system.

The so-called "Registration Fees" are neither more nor less than sources of income to the respective Hospitals, and to say that the officers who receive them, at the rate of 40 or 50 an hour, can better discriminate the merits of applicants than their fellow-workpeople who know them, is a figure of speech very difficult to justify.

I have known a poor woman pawn her counterpane to obtain a shilling, in order to secure her boy admission into a local Hospital; and many are the cases in which the money for the registration fee can only be obtained by begging. How cases shall be recommended for social, how selected for medical or surgical fitness, are questions for consideration by all the parties interested, and not to be solved by a hard and fast scale of wages and a so-called registration fee, which should be called by its right name—a source of revenue.

Any one interested in the history of the registration fee in Birmingham will do well to refer to the report of the Birmingham and Midland Hospital for sick children, 1871, pages 14 and 15. He will there see how completely the out-patients, under the free system, literally blocked the place; how the Committee tried one expedient after another, until they came to this conclusion. "There appears to be only one practical procedure for maintaining the number of out-patients within reasonable limits. This procedure is the payment of a small sum of money on a note being granted by the Secretary." At first a sixpence covered indefinite attendance, then shorter periods, now a fortnight. The result was an accession to revenue, which stimulated others to imitate the plan, and raise the so-called registration fee, in some cases, to half-a-crown monthly. Granting that the Committees are very anxious that those who have not the money to renew a note, and yet need and deserve care, may have it without payment. It must be borne in mind that much meritorious poverty is consistent with a large amount of self respect, and the mother of a large family, who was once able to pay her doctor, may be without half-a-crown, because her husband too is ill, or short of work, or both, and she may not like to avow, even to a female registration officer, the true state of things. She keeps away till the cure which the Surgeon's skill had commenced, stops and recedes, and the enemy steals a march until the great rest giver intervenes, and the home loses its sweetest solace.

Yet in so far as the registration fees now yield collectively to our Medical Charities a round annual sum of nearly £1,600, they are a source of income which cannot be abolished without much careful consideration.

The principle of part payment is on all fours with provident co-operation, and there is no reason why such a source of revenue



should not grow, provided the approval of the contributors be secured. Without such approval the registration fee becomes a tax, and often a most distasteful one.

How can the present state of things be justified? Here is a Hospital, for reasons which everyone will appreciate not to be named, where applicants for admission have to pay a registration fee. Let us assume that, on the morning after the distribution of the Hospital Saturday monies, an aged workman from Saltley Works, needing a truss, applies for it at the said Hospital. He is shown into a little office, where he has first to put down the shilling, and then proceed to answer the officer's questions. The old man has had a stout arm and a proud heart in his day, but he has to humble down now. He can no longer swing the big hammer, and has to live on reduced wages, with a good many pulls from aged and sick relatives. The questions put to him may be very proper ones, from the statistician's point of view; the questioner may be a model one; but that is poor comfort to the old workman, who at last finds his way before the Surgeon. A truss, it is found, is really necessary, and the old man receives a printed order with which he has to go back to the office and pay a further sum, from eighteen-pence to half-a-crown, or more, according to whether the required instrument is to be a single or a double one.

Now, why should the old man not have received his truss on a note of recommendation, signed by duly elected representatives of Saltley Works? From these great works came the first loud cheering note, when on January 18th, 1869, George Dawson launched our ship, "Hospital Self-Help." A note was unexpectedly put into his hands: it was signed by Benjamin Whitehouse, and told how the men of Saltley Works had held a meeting the previous Wednesday and unanimously resolved to help us. And how have they helped? By paying since that date very little, if any, short of £2,000, including our old Extension Fund, successive Hospital Saturdays, and annual subscriptions to Hospitals and Dispensaries, with thousands of pounds more to provident sick societies.

Surely those men have established a claim to be treated with moral confidence and kindly consideration; and the men at Saltley Works are not alone in such desserts. Their neighbours at the Britannia Carriage Works, the men at Tangyes' and at Winfield's, the tens of thousands in our lesser factories and workshops, will prove that they have hearts as good, and tender, and trusty, to anyone who knows *how* to get under the leather apron.

To go back once more to the first appeal, "The Charter," I may call it, of the Working Men's Fund for the extension of the Queen's Hospital, allow me to quote a paragraph.

"It is proposed that the new building shall be constructed on the best principle of Hospital management, to relieve deserving persons, check the evil of indiscriminate charity, and foster feelings of self-dependence, so as to be a worthy monument to prove how deeply the working men and women of Birmingham feel for their fellows in distress, and with what thorough earnestness they have resolved on a grand effort to help them."

Those are noble purposes, and it is submitted that the working classes have deserved to be taken into confidence by our Hospital Managers, and to be asked to co-operate in planning a scheme for checking Hospital abuses, and for relieving only really deserving persons in a fitting manner.

The Hospital Saturday Committee, enlarged if need be, by wider working-class representation, is a body eminently entitled to be admitted to counsel in such a matter. Whenever they are so admitted, the effect on the succeeding Hospital Saturday Collection will not fail to be a very striking, and a very encouraging, one. Granting that, in the main, the scheme of distribution of Hospital Saturday money has worked satisfactorily, it must be remembered that it was hastily devised in the inexperience and hurry of the first collection, at a moment when Hospital Saturday was thought likely to produce only as many hundreds as it has yielded thousands. The question for the future is, whether the contribution of a few more thousands annually cannot be stimulated by a modification of the existing plan; by grafting on it, without uprooting it.

Might not a sum be set apart every year to accomplish some special object, which the people could go and look at, and show their children, and be proud of, and grow the better for thinking of?

Once more to our old Working Men's Hospital Charter. We set before ourselves a wide programme, as yet only partially accomplished. The chief success, for the time, was the out-patient department at the Queen's, and that remains all in all, one of the very best in the world; but we had other aims, which we were not able to realise. Here are three of them, in the words of our original programme.

(1) "The establishment of a fund to provide working men whom accident has deprived of their limbs with the best made artificial substitutes."

(2) "Carriages and stretchers of proper construction for the easy conveyance of the sick and wounded."

(3) "Baths for out-patients, to lessen the risk of the public baths being used for sick purposes."

Take the first of these objects. What a blessing it would be if a Sub-Committee of the Hospital Saturday Committee had a fund to provide people, maimed in the factories contributing to Hospital Saturday, with surgical appliances, artificial limbs, and other supports, for the want of which many of them become paupers. Or the second object. What a blessing a Hospital Saturday Ambulance for injured persons would be to the whole town. Or the third. The system of baths for diseased persons, such as we had designed for the Queen's Hospital—according to the plan I hold in my hand. The ground in the rear of the Queen's Hospital offers a beautiful site. It was never intended that the baths, once erected, should be for that Hospital alone, but, under proper regulations for all the Medical Charities. Such a work could be accomplished with the overflow of a big Hospital Saturday, with the certainty that double the money would pour in the following year.



It is only right that the influence of the working classes should be felt in Hospital administration in direct proportion to the growth of their Hospital support. One way to do that, would be to set aside a sum every year to be allotted in turn to a particular Hospital, for purposes to be approved by the Hospital Saturday Committee. By way of suggestive illustration ; the Committee of the Eye Hospital are just now erecting a new and much needed institution, on an excellent site in Edmund Street. Their Building Fund is nearly £10,000 short of the required amount. Why should not some part of the new Eye Hospital, say, an accident ward, or the operating theatre, or a convalescent hall, be paid for with a cheque for a few hundreds from Hospital Saturday money ? Another year, a similar amount, twice as much if you like in a couple of years, might be devoted to the much needed system of invalid baths at Queen's. Another year, the Children's Hospital might be glad of a cheque to improve its cramped out-patient department. Only let it be understood that the work was done by working-class contributions, and the monuments, dotted here and there over the town, would almost be as powerful means of education to the people as our glorious Reference Library. For great as is the teaching and inspiration of books, they are not the only source of moral and intellectual culture.

Objects for good work, to stimulate exertion in their support, are never wanting. The Sanatorium at Blackwell, admirably constituted and excellently managed, is quite inadequate to its purpose. Why should not the Hospital Saturday Committee send a few cheques to such Sanatoria as Bath, Bournemouth, and Buxton, Hastings, and the Isle of Wight, and let some of our sick toilers, on the co-operative principle, with the assistance and by the election of their mates, enjoy the inestimable privilege of nature's health springs and balmy air, of southern breezes and lovely gardens. For every £100 of Hospital Saturday money so spent, grand indeed would be the interest ; and as the Medical Charities sought some exceptional privilege year by year they could all have justice in turn. It is also reasonable to suppose, that their managers might then evince a little more readiness than has yet been apparent in admitting provident co-operators into the work of Hospital management. Men only learn the full value and difficulty of anything by working for it, and enjoying the sense and responsibility of possessing it.

The idea that Hospitals can be free to everyone—that admission can be purchased with a sixpence, a shilling, or half-a-crown—is fatal to the true functions of a Hospital, as a place for the skilled treatment of cases which cannot be so well managed elsewhere. A surgeon or a physician with a hundred and fifty cases or more, nearly half of them new ones, to see in one morning, is in a position at once painful and ridiculous, all the more so if, as frequently happens in a free Hospital with scanty income, he has scarcely any, or no, beds in which to admit the most urgent cases.

Once the working-class representatives had an opportunity, by personal observation and responsible intervention, of appreciating these difficulties, they would become useful allies in the urgently-needed work of reformed Hospital administration.



The complete success of Hospital Saturday depends in no small measure upon the method of collecting the money, and this is a matter attended with no little difficulty.

In 1873, our first year, barely eleven weeks elapsed from the first meeting, at which the Committee was appointed, and the day of collection, March 15th. The result, £4,705 11s. 3d., was a magnificent proof of the warm-heartedness and ready response of the working classes. Acting on the experience gained with the Working Men's Fund for the extension of the Queen's Hospital, our Committee abstained most scrupulously from recommending any set method of collection. Some might give the value of one, others of two or more hours of labour; some might have a collecting box in the various shops or factories; some again circulate cards, others undertake to give one or more pence a week for a shorter or longer period. Nothing was to be done to mar the purely voluntary character of the gifts. At this point I cannot refrain from acknowledging the advantages conferred on our original band of workers, by the late Charles Vince, than whom I never met a man who better understood the peculiar power, and jealous susceptibility, of the voluntary principle. His was an eminently sympathetic nature, and no one knew, better than he did, that light touches of the right chord evoke the readiest and most genial responses.

In dealing with large masses of men, there is no doubt that method and discipline have their value; nay, are in great measure indispensable. But even a vast army of soldiers is a poor machine as a merely disciplined horde. Sense of patriotism, belief in its leaders, chivalrous love for the colours, are only a few of the incentives to the soldier's bravery. Scarcely less powerful than any of them, are the war-songs set to simple melodies to solace the night watches. From its old Emperor and General, down to its companies of grave-diggers, no host was ever more grimly and perfectly disciplined for the murderous work of war, than was the German army which invaded France in 1871. Yet even a von Moltke and a Bismarck could not dispense with poetry. When the conquerors laid down their arms, the bard who inspired the war-song "The Watch upon the Rhine," was decorated with a title of nobility. Might not a little poetic imagination benefit Hospital Saturday?

The object of this address is not to find fault, but so far as possible to assist; not to recall the painful part of lessons of experience, which every generous man knows how sweet it is to forget, but the rather to cull from them suggestions, for their profitable usefulness.

The recent incident, which resulted in a workman recovering in a Court of Justice money said to have been stopped at a penny a week for Hospital Saturday, is only recalled, to point to a possible danger attending the system. A recommendation from head-quarters is apt, in process of transmission, to assume the character of an order. In the particular instance, we may assume that the matter would not have been submitted to legal decision but for some misunderstanding. A hitch is liable to occur in the best machinery; and

in the case just casually referred to, every friend of the movement must hope sincerely that it may in no way suffer.

Some well-intentioned people fancy that the best way of dealing with a difficulty is to put it out of sight somehow or anyhow, just as a careless housemaid flatters herself she has cleaned the room, when she has only swept the dirt under the hearth rug. My profession teaches me the value of free ventilation and gentle manipulation, because foul air chokes the springs of life, and rough handling provokes resistance. So, once an evil is manifest or threatened, I prefer to inquire into its causes, and institute such remedy as seems likely to remove or prevent it, with the least possible risk or disturbance. As one means of promoting the Hospital Saturday collection, the penny a week system has been, and is, very useful. Nothing should be done to injure it—all that is possible to supplement it. It is impossible to take too great care, to safe-guard the voluntary principle, which is of the very essence of the movement. Every contributor will do well to bear in mind the frank and decisive words which Alderman Cook addressed to his Committee the 15th of last month:—"He hoped their friends would make it known that the question of forcing had never entered the minds of the Committee in any shape or form whatever, and they have always asked for the payments to be voluntary."

The projectors of Hospital Saturday did not aspire to make it a success, on the mere mechanical principle of "many a mickle makes a muckle." The penny-a-week system in factories and workshops is vastly older than Hospital Saturday, in instituting which it was hoped to sanctify a labour day, by the sacrifices and loving thoughts of those yet blessed with the strength to work, on behalf of fellow toilers laid low by injury or disease.

"In the Sunday movement one main feature from its origin has been the simultaneous collection on one Sunday in all places of worship, regardless of creed or sect, for the relief in our Hospitals and Dispensaries. Those gifts have been a common offering of practical piety from those who enjoy the blessings of health to those who are deprived of them for a time, many, unhappily never to regain them. Leaving practical religion to work its power in soothing pain, strenuous action—that next grand remedy of human ills—was the agency on which we relied for the success of our first Hospital Saturday, March 15th. For that day the men with big muscles, the women and children with nimble fingers, gave one, two, three, and, in some places, more hours labour; that, out of the excess of their health and strength, those whom accident had deprived of the use of their limbs, those whose very life blood had been thinned or poisoned by insidious disease might in their helplessness be comforted by the thought that, as they were lying, helpless objects of charity, the sweat was trickling down the heavy ironworker's brow, the eyes and fingers of the skilled artisans were being strained to work for Hospital Saturday, that the blind and the palsied might have sight and strength."\* We relied on the power of sympathy,

\* Speech by Sampson Gangee, reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, June 13th, 1873.



happily common to mankind. Rapid as was our first advance, some may complain that it has not been followed up with increasing speed ; but that has been no one's fault. According to their knowledge and resources, the Committee, presided over by Mr. J. S. Wright and his worthy successor, Alderman Cook, with Mr. Gilliver in the vice-chair, Mr. Joseph Beattie, Treasurer, with Mr. T. James as Deputy, and Mr. W. T. Smedley, Secretary, have done their very best. The employers and their staffs of clerks have given all necessary assistance to the workpeople, and yet a very large part of the population are outside the movement.

Reverting once more to 1868, when the Working Men's Fund for the Queen's Hospital was projected, something like 90 years had then elapsed since Dr. Ash founded the General Hospital. In that long period the working classes had only been contributors to our various Hospitals a little over 20 years, their totals having reached £506 12s. 9d. in 1867. That figure, in 15 years, has grown to £8,000, which in round numbers will represent the workpeople's contributions to our Hospitals this year, under the various heads of Hospital Saturday, Registration Fees, and Annual Subscriptions, taking no note of their share in Hospital Sunday, or of that truly charming work, "The Children's Hospital Sunday" for The Children's Hospital.

After all then, progress has not been so very slow ; and if it had been, some comfort is at hand, as I ventured to say at the banquet presided over by Lord Leigh, when he laid the foundation stone of the working men's block of the Queen's Hospital Extension, "The very slowness of the work will have been a process of education to the working classes ; men are best trained as thinkers and workers at slow paces ; and it would be well if the masses of the people had more opportunity of learning socially, what they know so well mechanically—the gradual development of constructive work, which is to possess the stability necessary for endurance."

Sick Societies, Sick Clubs so called, Dispensaries and Hospitals are practically parts of one system, and it is only right to take into account what the working classes did for themselves, long before Statesmen became alive to the necessity of utilising their provident social instincts, as a great factor in the growth and safety of the prosperity of the State.

Look at the Cannon Street Male Provident Institution, in no way a Trade Society, or a political organization. Are not its funds (£80,000) a fact of great significance ? From a return which was prepared for me some years ago by Mr. William Gilliver, the Vice-Chairman of the Hospital Saturday Committee, I gather that 23 of the principal sick societies had collectively 32,237 members, paying annually £4,895 to their medical officers and £26,304 to their members for sickness and funerals—the capitalized value of these societies being no less than £213,193. I am not here to compliment the working classes. What influence I have the great happiness to possess with them, has been gained by other means than flattery. But, frankly ; take one or two classes in the community above the weekly-wage receivers, would it be easy to find the materials for a return to



match Mr. Gilliver's just quoted? What is wanted is to utilise, to develop, to marshal, not merely the political instincts of the masses which have attracted the energy, the wealth, the passions of so many of our leaders. Let a little more thought be given, not solely to gathering together the pence, but to cultivating the principles, not merely to asking how can we increase the fund? but how can we make the masses more intelligent participators in the provident work? Many roads lead to Rome. Many thoughts many minds. Let each choose his way for attaining his object. Unity, fixity of purpose and variety of means, is the scheme of nature's operations. Let us imitate her, and stimulate ingenuity in devising plans and multiplying sources of power and springs of success. Some one scheme will become the most popular, and predominate. Let it grow by its own growth and on its own merits. Make the people feel an interest and a pride in the institutions which they have to support. Treat them, not as pieces of a vast machinery, but as intelligent units in a community which prides itself on being in the van of human progress. We may then all the sooner attain the happiness of feeling, that a very large part of our population are not being manufactured into a race of beggars.

All who have taken part in this work have gained some experience. A vast amount of it has been treasured by Hospital Saturday Committees here and elsewhere. I would suggest that each should try to benefit from the other's lessons, and I think the day is not far distant when great good might be achieved from a conference of Hospital Saturday Committees. Even London, where Hospital Saturday is being worked so vigorously, and with such improving financial results, might learn something from West Bromwich; and the Birmingham Committee, surrounded by the others' representatives, might realise how a parent's chief honour may lie in the growth of offspring in stature and wisdom.

Whatever method of collection for Hospital Saturday money is pursued, and I would oppose no method that may help in attaining the much-needed success, I do hope that the plan will find increasing favour of making the day itself a day of labour sacrifice. If I dwell on this point, I am sure you will forgive me. All Hospital Saturday money is good money; but personally I should prefer, and be prouder of, those contributions which result from work on that very day. And I should like to see it become known, not only that the Birmingham workpeople on that particular day toiled an hour or more for their suffering fellows; but that they then did better, because truer and more loving, work, to honour and promote its practical benevolence.

If it be objected that some of the thoughts embodied in this address are dreams,—so they may be. If some complain that this address is rather too much of a rhapsody, and is in need of a practical summing up, I accept the criticism. But dreams, as active men's night thoughts, have their suggestive worth, and it is sometimes wise to defer too much practical definiteness, pending a talk over and a look round which may be rapid, and yet not valueless.

But enough, and too much I fear for your kind indulgence. If I trespass on it a few moments longer it is to thank my colleagues, the President and Council of this the Birmingham Medical Institute for having allowed me to address you in this Library. You will clearly understand that they are not bound by any opinions I have expressed. You and I are for the hour their guests. The place, the books around us, those benches on which the members of our Medical Societies regularly meet, suggest many thoughts bearing on the great question of Hospital relief, in which the Medical profession is so deeply interested. The time is not far distant when their opinion must be heard by the State. No one has done more, none so much, as the members of my profession, in the foundation, organization, and daily working of Hospitals. No one makes such great sacrifices for them; and if, as seems probable, these institutions are to partake more and more of a co-operative character, the relations to them of the Medical profession must be dispassionately reconsidered.

I would conclude with an expression of very sincere hope, that when you have an opportunity of carefully considering the facts and suggestions which I have ventured to submit to you, you will deem them not altogether without value. What they lack, your thought and experience will supply. If I have only sketched, where some might have wished I had filled in, it is because I think designs in outline have their value, when they stimulate others to construct. If I have left many things unsaid, which others might have been glad or curious to hear, it is because I am fond of the saying "that speech being silver, silence may be golden." In so vast a matter as that of which we have barely touched the fringe, no individual worker can do much. If, after some rest from public work, I have stepped out for the hour, to offer a few suggestions, it was because I felt implicit confidence in your friendly interpretation of an old fellow-worker's anxiety, at the commencement of a second decade of the Hospital Saturday movement, to recall its original principles, and to endeavour to promote their growth with all the resources of acquired experience.